

REMARKS

A total of 33 claims remain in the present application. The following comments are presented in response to the Office Action mailed November 12, 2008, wherefore reconsideration of this application is requested.

Referring now to the text of the Final Office Action, claims 2-8, 10-15, 19, and 23-40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over the teaching of U.S. Patent No. 6,697,840 (Godefroid) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,546,005 (Berkley) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,076,504 (Handel et al.).

These rejections are believed to be traversed by way of the above-noted claim amendments, and further in view of the following discussion.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

For the sake of brevity, the following comments will focus on the newly cited reference to Handel et al, and should be considered as cumulative to Applicant's previously submitted arguments with respect to Godefroid and Berkley.

As noted in the Applicant's response filed August 20, 2008, claim 35 defines that "the first team member is a member of two or more teams, and wherein the Virtual Team Environment (VTE) client application enables the first team member to interact with the persistent collaboration services suite to select a respective different one of the plurality of member profiles as the current profile for each of the teams. Thus, for example, the team member can be a member of three teams, and can indicate that he is "in the office"; but at the same time indicate a preference to communicate with one team via e-mail ONLY, a second team via telephone ONLY, and the third team via instant messaging ONLY. Claim 35 provides that the team member can easily define these preferences, by selecting an appropriate one of his profiles as the "current profile" for each team. At page 4 of the Detailed action, the Examiner admits that the combination of Godefroid and Berkley fail to teach or fairly suggest this feature. However, the Examiner further cites U.S. Patent No. 7,076,504 (Handel et al.), and argues that Handle et al provides the missing teaching. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

U.S. Patent No. 7,076,504 (Handel et al.) teaches a Web-based database system for collecting and distributing profile information regarding a user. According to Handel et al, a hierarchical profile structure is created (see FIG. 12), in which a user can create a plurality of “personas”, each of which pertains to a respective context of the user. Within each persona, a plurality of “profile objects” are used to store user-information pertaining to that context. Thus, in the example of FIG. 12, Handel shows three different personas: a “work” persona, a “home” persona, and a “Tahoe” persona, each of which pertains to a specific context (in Handel’s example, physical location) of the user. Within each persona, respective profile objects contain user information, including contact information, relevant to that context. FIG. 12 also shows that a common profile object may be shared by multiple personas. Thus, for example, the same contact profile object (“Home”) is shared by both the “home” and “Tahoe” personas.

Applying the teaching of Handel et al to the present invention, Handel’s contexts appear to correlate with team member “roles” of the present invention, in which case Handel’s personas are equivalent to team member profiles, and Handel’s profile objects would appear to correlate with particular fields (or groups of fields) within a team member profile. Handel et al explicitly teaches that multiple personas can be created, and Handel’s teaching of multiple “home” personas at least suggests the possibility of multiple “work” personas, each of which would be associated with a respective different work context. Presumably, a work context could include membership in a team, in which case, Handel et al suggests the possibility of defining a different persona (team member profile) for each context (team of which the user is a member).

However, Handel et al do not provide a means by which a user can define a persona independently of its context, because the only explicit definition of the context is contained with the persona object (see FIG. 12). As such, the person of ordinary skill in the art will recognise that Handel et al provide no means by which multiple different personas (team member profiles) can be defined, and then one of the set of personas selected as a current persona for a given context (team). However, this precisely what is required by the present invention.

More particularly, present claim 35 defines that “the VTE client application enable[s] the first team member to interact with the persistent collaboration services suite to define a plurality of different member profiles associated with the team member”, and further “enables the first team member to interact with the persistent collaboration services suite to select a respective different one of the plurality of member profiles as the current profile for each of the teams.” Thus claim 35 defines an arrangement in which a plurality of member profiles can be defined without reference to membership in any given team. The team member then selects a desired one of the previously defined profiles as the current profile for each team. The person of ordinary skill in the art will recognise that this operation requires respective different data structures for defining the team (context) and the member profile (persona). But Handle et al. provide no such separation of context and persona. As such, it will be seen that Handle et al fail to teach or fairly suggest an arrangement in which “the first team member is a member of two or more teams, and wherein the Virtual Team Environment (VTE) client application enables the first team member to interact with the persistent collaboration services suite to select a respective different one of the plurality of member profiles as the current profile for each of the teams” as required by the present claims.

It may also be noted that a closely similar analysis of Handel et al applies if Handle et al is interpreted such that Handel’s “profile objects” are treated as being equivalent to the claimed member profiles. In this case, Handel et al teach that a persona can have its own “profile object” definition, or can use a corresponding profile object of another persona. For example, the “Home” persona uses its own “home” contact profile object. The “Tahoe” persona, on the other hand, does not have its own contact profile object, but rather uses the contact profile object of the “Home” persona. It will be seen, however, that the contact profile object belongs to the “Home” persona, and carries the context information of that persona. Handel et al do not appear to suggest any arrangement by which a plurality of profile objects can be defined independently of any given persona, and then one of the predefined profile objects selected as the current profile object for each persona, as required by the claims.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the presently claimed invention is clearly distinguishable over the teaching of the cited references, taken alone or in any combination. Thus it is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance, and early action in that respect is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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